



Entertainment Apps on the Go with Windows 10

Music, Movies, and TV for PCs,
Tablets, and Phones

Maximize the entertainment potential
of your Windows devices

Ian Dixon
Garry Whittaker

Apress®

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Introduction

In more than 10 years of hosting our weekly Digital Lifestyle Show, we have seen many methods of storing and playing media (be that music, video, or photos) come and go.

At the start, most of our listeners stored their media, if they did so at all, on a Windows desktop PC and usually consumed it on the same PC. They might have had some sort of MP3 player, and iPods were beginning to make an impact, but it certainly wasn't the diverse marketplace it is now.

We have seen the growth of both Apple's iOS and Google's Android platforms, the birth of downloadable media, and in recent years the surge of streaming services such as Netflix.

While in those early days we had a dream of one integrated system where we could listen to and view our media on our desktop, phone, and even games platform, this has dissolved into a world where media is usually tied to the technology family you most use, be it Microsoft, Apple, or Google.

Even within Microsoft's platforms it has become increasingly difficult to find one solution to share your media.

This is why we are really excited by the opportunities Windows 10 brings. It has the promise of a universal Windows platform. This is a way of allowing apps to run on any variant of Windows 10 on any platform it supports. Windows 10 supports a lot of platforms from desktops and laptops to tablets and phones to even Xbox One and Raspberry Pi 2.

Microsoft has also cleverly made some of its core media apps from Windows 10 available on other platforms including Apple and Google.

Where your media comes from and how it is stored will still depend whether at heart you are a Microsoft, Apple, or Google devotee, but Windows 10 holds out the hope of being able to consume that media everywhere.

This book will help show you how to fulfill that ambition.

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About the Authors and About the Technical Reviewer

About the Authors

Ian Dixon

is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional, founder of TheDigitalLifestyle.com tech site, and host of the weekly Digital Lifestyle Show podcast. He has been writing and talking about Windows for more than 10 years and has more than 20 experience in the industry. Ian has thousands of followers on Twitter and Facebook and more than 4 million views on his YouTube channel.



Garry Whittaker

is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional and the co-host of the Digital Lifestyle show. He has been writing about and giving talks on Windows for more than 20 years. Garry is also the editor of FascinatingTech, an online technology magazine with thousands of readers, and the writer of its FascinatingAudio column. Garry understands what makes Windows apps tick and has more than 15 years of app development experience and more than 30 years of experience in the industry.



About the Technical Reviewer

Greg Kettell

is a software developer with more than 25 years of experience in developing everything from games enterprise applications and web sites, and he has contributed as an author and technical reviewer for numerous books. He currently resides in upstate New York with his wife and their pets. His hobbies include photography, amateur astronomy, and homebrewing.



1. Music Services on the Go

Ian Dixon¹✉ and Garry Whittaker¹

(1) Lancashire, UK

If music be the food of love, play on, so said Duke Orsino in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Our love of music is still as strong today as it was back then. However, we often can struggle to play our music where we want. Windows 10, coupled with the ability to use Microsoft's music apps on Android and Apple devices, looks to solve that quandary. You can now take your music anywhere.

With Windows 10, you can enjoy music on your PC, laptop, tablet, or phone with a range of services.

In this chapter, you will look at how to download, stream, and purchase music on your Android, iOS, or Windows phone, tablet, or laptop with Microsoft Groove and third-party services. You will also find out how you can listen to radio stations and podcasts on the move.

Listening to Your Music with Groove

Information

Microsoft changed the name of its music app in Windows 10 from Xbox Music, as it was known in Windows 8, to Groove. You may find that on some platforms with older versions it is still referred to as Xbox Music.

Groove is Microsoft's music service that combines a number of features into one service that works with Windows 10, Xbox One, iPad, and Android devices.

With the services you can listen to your own music stored on a PC or phone, stream music from the cloud, and purchase music directly from your device.

Groove breaks down into four areas: listening to music stored on the device, streaming music from your personal collection on Microsoft's servers, purchasing albums and songs from Microsoft, and using Microsoft's music subscription service.

Groove on a PC or Laptop

When you think of taking music on the move, you might be tempted to limit your thoughts to just phones or portable media players such as the iPod Touch. That would be wrong. Feedback from listeners to our weekly *The Digital Lifestyle* show reveals that a surprising amount of music playback on the go still occurs on Windows devices, such as the Surface line, and laptops. These will be running the desktop or PC version of Windows 10, and in this section you will look at what this offers for you to play your music.

Once you open the app, you are presented with a view of your collection of music stored on your PC (Figure 1-1).

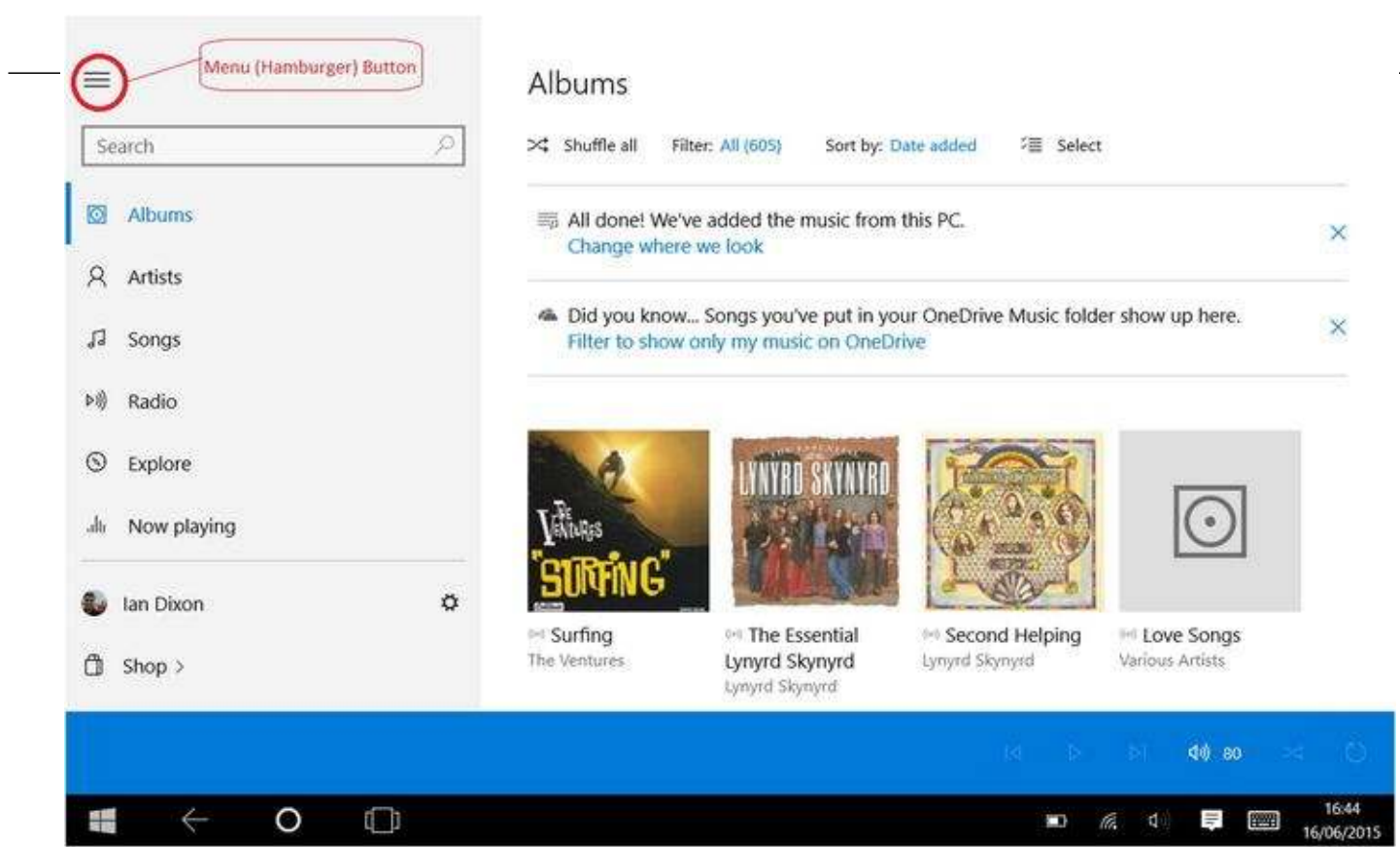


Figure 1-1. Groove on a Windows 10 PC. Highlighted at the top left is the menu button

By default the app looks for music in the `This PC\music` folder of your PC, but you can change that if you like. You can change the location by going to Settings and selecting “Choose where we look for music.” When you click the link, a window pops up showing where the app currently looks for music (Figure 1-2), and it gives you the option to add a new location to the app. Just select the Add (shown as a plus sign in a circle) button, and a dialog box will pop up where you can select a folder for the app to look in. Once you have done this, the music app will automatically add all the music stored in the selection folder and subfolders. Click Done to close the dialog box.

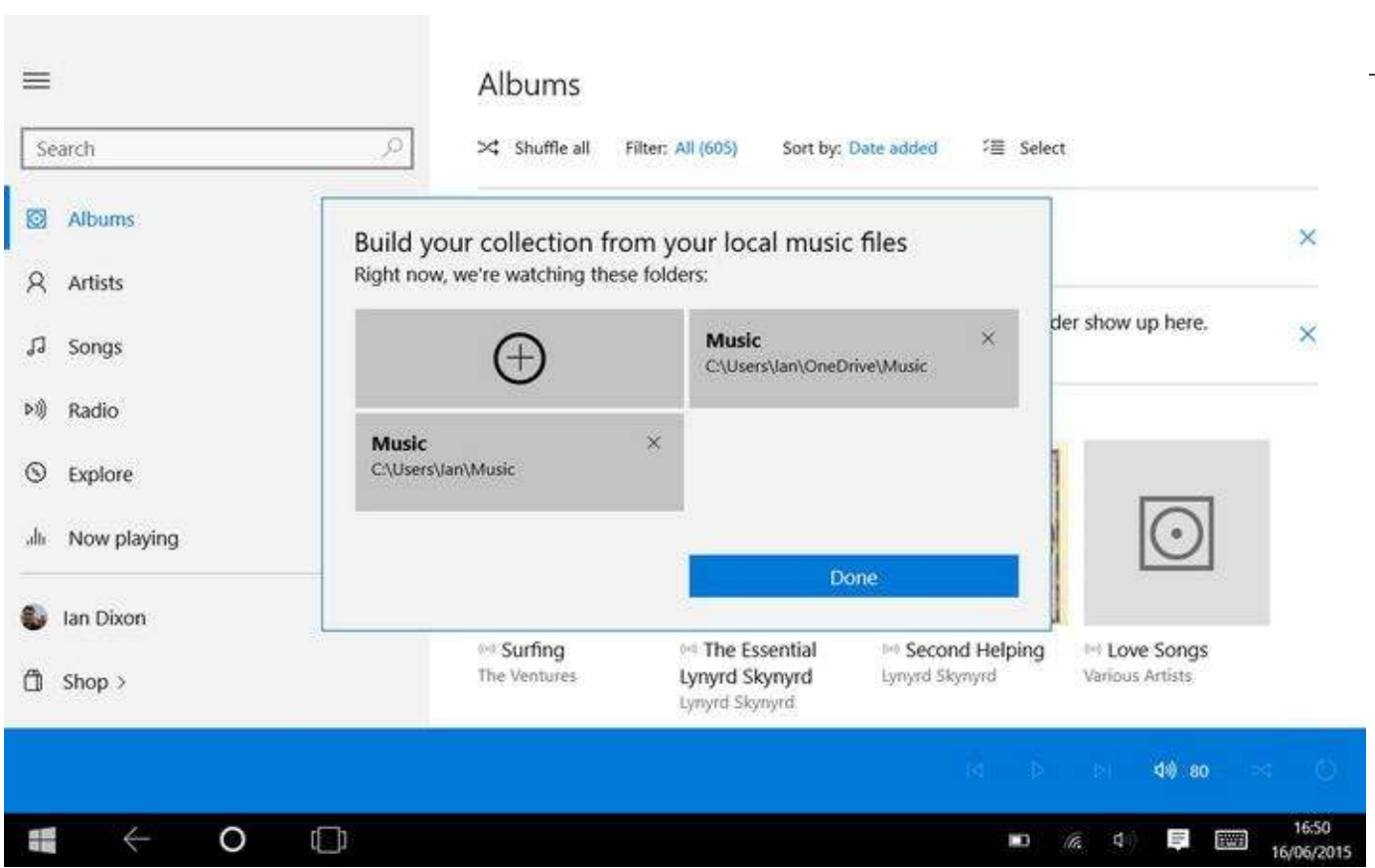


Figure 1-2. Choosing, in Groove, where to select music from

Don't worry if you don't have any music in your collection. Later in the chapter you will learn how to add music from iTunes and other sources. You can also add music from the Windows Store, as shown in Figure 1-3.

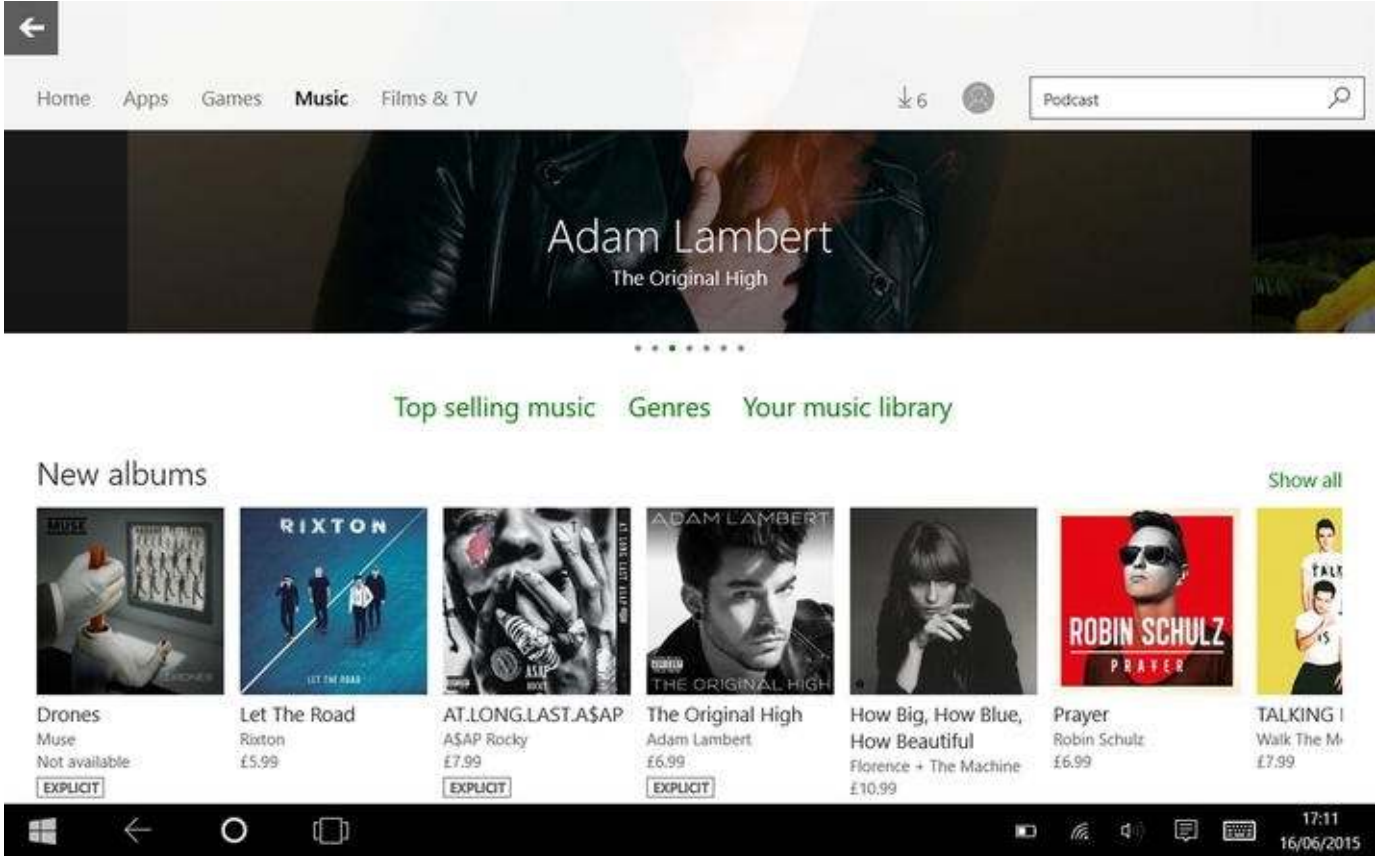


Figure 1-3. You can also obtain music from the Windows Store

In this section, you saw how to select what music you would like to add to your collection in Groove. In the next section, you will look at how to play that music.

Playing Music

The music app can display your collection in different views including by album, artist, song, or playlist. You can pick your preferred view by selecting the relevant icon on the left side of the app. If the menu is not visible, you can use the menu button at the top left of the window to toggle it open.

Information

The menu button looks like three horizontal lines on top of each other. Some people think this looks like a hamburger, and thus this type of menu is often referred to as a *hamburger menu* (shown earlier in Figure 1-1).

In the Artists view, the artists are sorted alphabetically, and selecting a letter brings up the alphabet where you can then jump to another letter, making it easy to quickly find your artists if you have a large collection. When you select an artist, the app shows the albums and song in your collection from those artists. You can either select Play, which is a rightward-pointing triangle, to play the songs from the artist or select the plus sign to add the songs to a playlist (more on that in a minute).

In the Albums view (Figures 1-4 and 1-5), each album is represented by a thumbnail of the album cover. Clicking the cover shows the album details and track listing. Pressing the Play icon, a rightward-pointing triangle, will play whole album, or you can select an individual track by clicking and pressing the Play button.

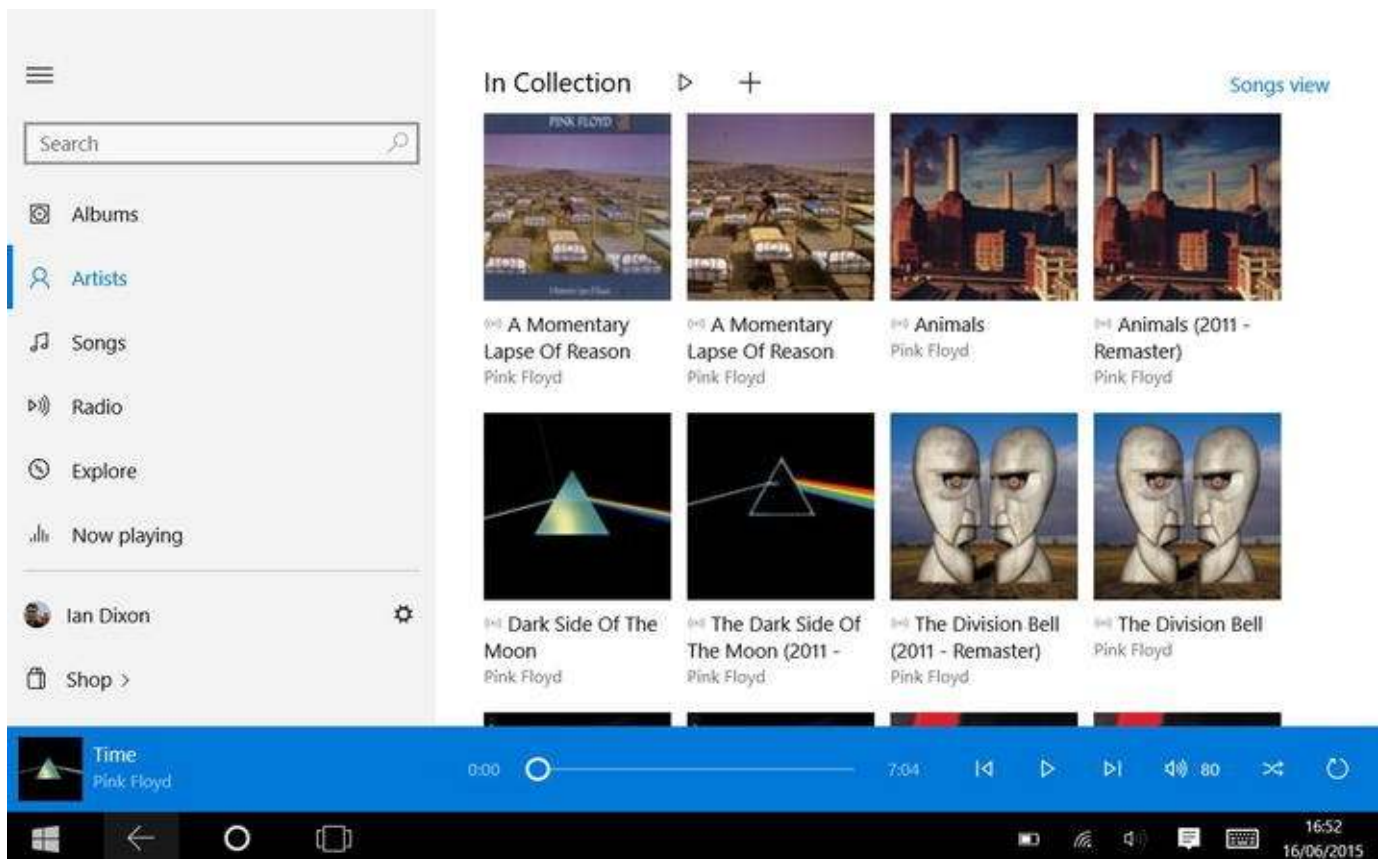


Figure 1-4. Artist's Albums view, desktop

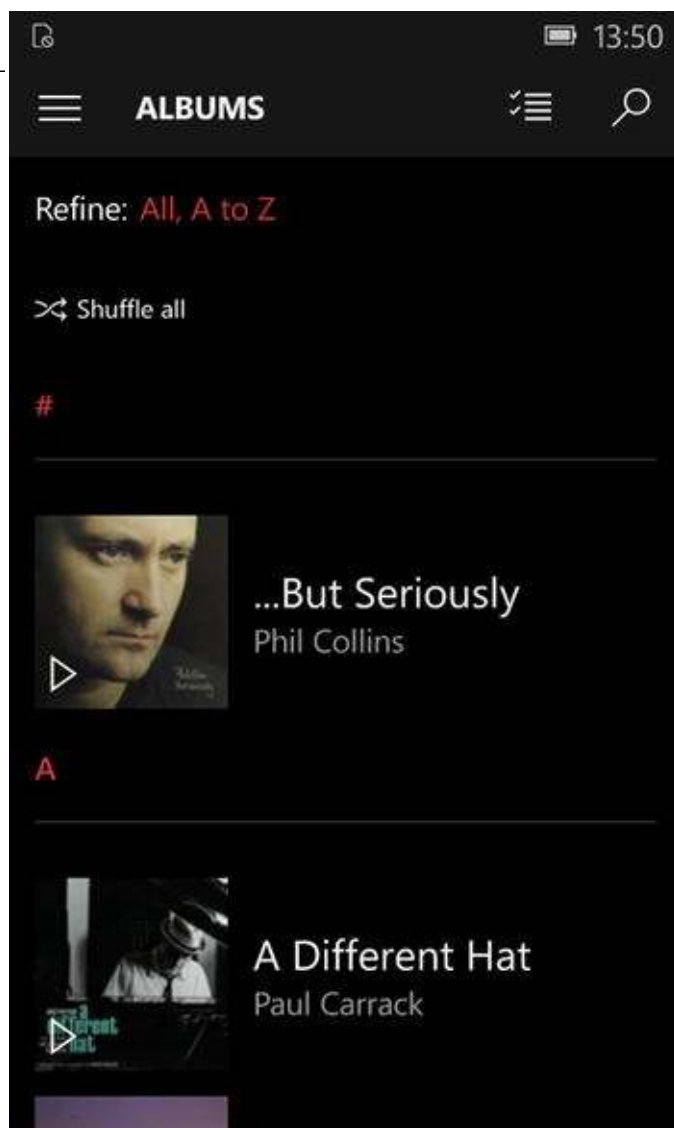


Figure 1-5. Albums view looks different on a phone or small tablet

You can also add a song or the whole album to a playlist by clicking/tapping the plus icon.

Information

A *playlist* is a collection of songs that you can play back later. For example, you could create a list of songs for working out to or songs you like driving to. They can be any combination of music you like. To create a new playlist, you click/tap the plus icon in the icon list on the right side.

You can then enter a name for the playlist and click on Save. This creates a new playlist and then takes you back to your music collection.

When you click/tap a song, you will see a plus sign, which presents you with a list of your playlists; you can select the playlist you want to add the song to.

If you want to add a selection of songs, albums, or artists to a playlist or download a group of songs, there is an easy way to do it. Switch to the desired section by selecting either the Albums, Artists, or Songs view from the left menu. Then you can click/tap the Select button at the top.

Note

The Select button in Windows 10 is often shown as four horizontal lines on top of each other with two check marks beside them. You can see this at the top right of Figure 1-5.

Then click/tap the songs/albums you want to select (a check mark shows a selected file). When you select content, a menu bar will appear at the bottom of the screen. You can also select multiple tracks by holding down the Ctrl key and clicking the desired items (on a PC Only).

On the menu bar you will see a Play button, which will play the selected songs. There is a plus icon, which enables you to add the selected songs to a playlist. There is also a Download button, which downloads the selected songs from the cloud to your local device (more on that later). You can also use the select button to delete a group of songs.

At the top of most screens you will notice there is an option for filtering.

With the Filter button, you can choose whether to show your entire music collection or narrow it to the music stored on your local device, streaming, or on OneDrive (see Figure 1-6).

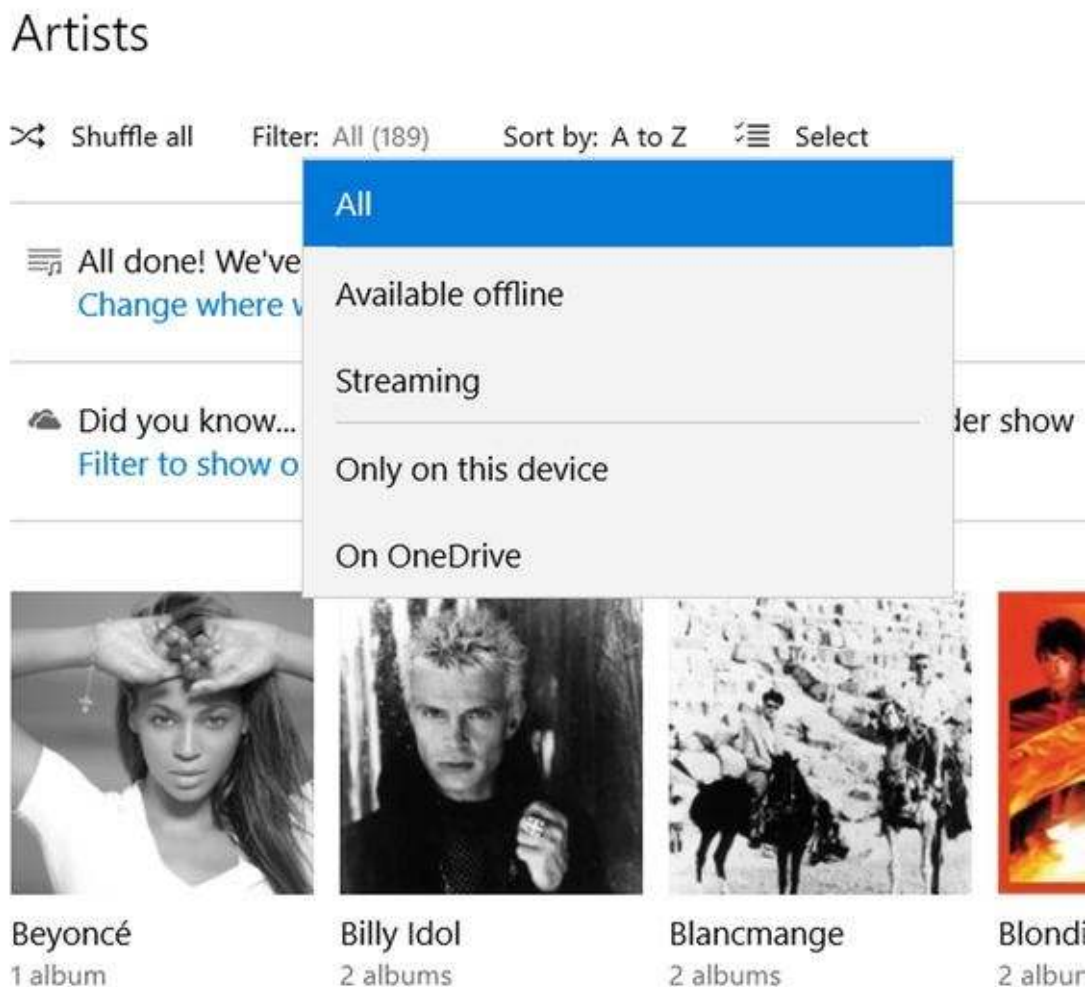


Figure 1-6. Filtering

The All option does what you expect and shows your entire collection. The “Available offline” option shows music stored only on the PC (available to listen to without being on the Internet), which includes music stored on your device as well as songs you have previously streamed from the cloud and are cached on your device.

The Streaming option shows music stored on OneDrive or available as part of your Groove subscription. The “Only on this device” option filters the list to show just music on the device you are using.

The On OneDrive storage option is something you will learn about in [Chapter 2](#). It’s basically Microsoft’s free cloud storage where you can store your music collection on Microsoft’s servers and

access the content from any of your devices or the Web.

You can also choose how the app should sort and arrange your music. There is a **Sort By** link where you can select from the following options: Date added, A to Z, Release year, Genre (type of music), Artist, or Album.

There is a “Shuffle all” button on the top left. Selecting “Shuffle all” starts playing music within the current view in a random order. This feature is great when you are not sure what kind of music you are in the mood for.

When you play a song, the Now Playing bar (Figure 1-7) at the bottom of the app shows the progress of the current song and has Previous Track, Play/Pause, Next Track, Volume, Shuffle, and Repeat buttons, in that order.



Figure 1-7. The Now Playing bar at the bottom of the screen

Note

Because there is little space on the Now Playing bar, the buttons to control playback use icons rather than words (see Figure 1-7), but they are in the order mentioned.

The Shuffle button plays your current song selection in random order; for instance, if you are playing an album, the shuffle mode will play the songs in a random order. The Repeat button tells the app to play the current song list again after it gets to the end of the current playlist (or album) rather than stop at the end.

Another option is the “Now playing” view, accessible from the left menu. This displays the current song selection as a list along with album artwork. In this view there is also a button (see Figure 1-8) to show the “Now playing” view in full-screen. This shows a slide show of artist artwork that looks especially good on a tablet.

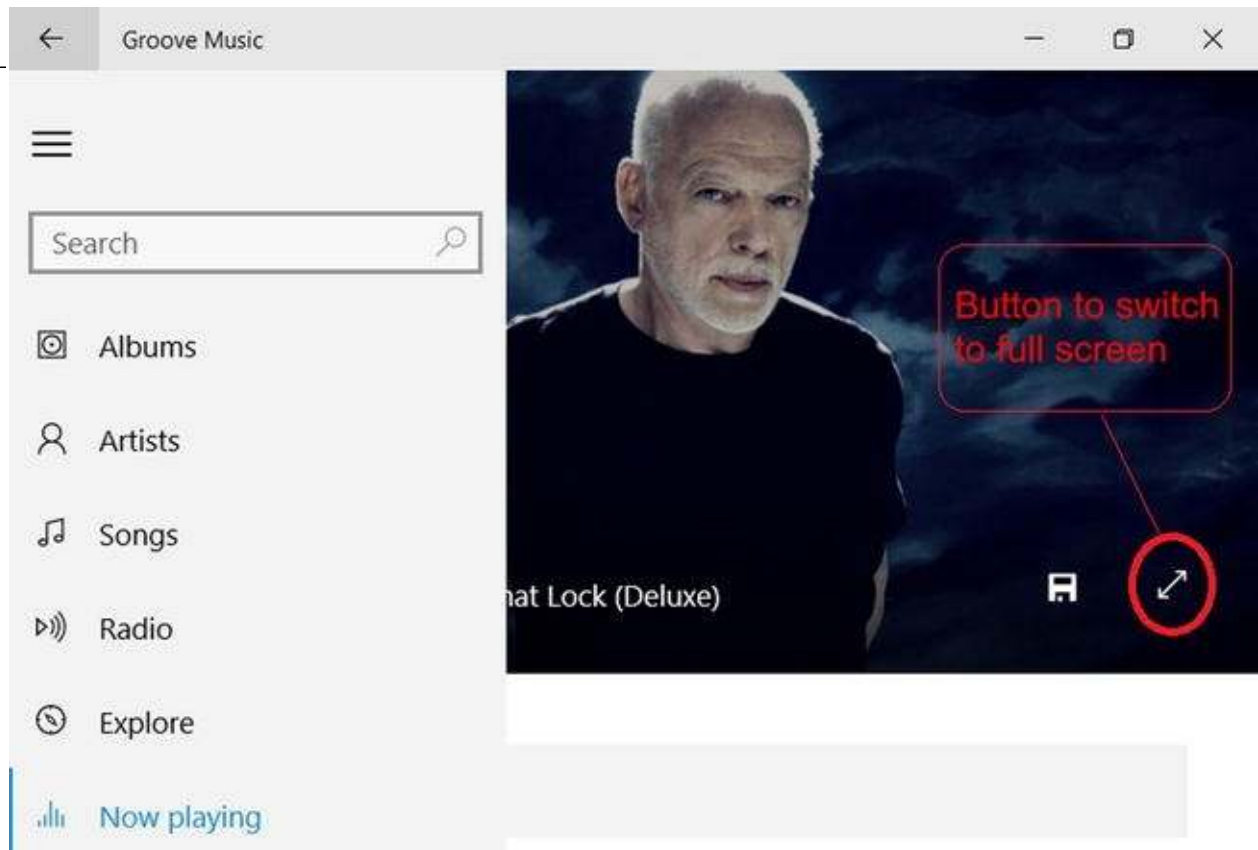


Figure 1-8. “Now playing” view with Switch to full screen button highlighted

Information

The “Now playing” full-screen view is also good when used on large-screen cathode-ray tube (CRT) and plasma screens because it helps prevent burn-in.

When a music track changes or you change the volume, the app displays a notification showing the volume and the current track.

In this section, you learned how to play your music and the useful options displayed while playing that music. In the next section, you’ll look at a great way of accessing particular music quickly.

Pinning Content to the Start Menu

Another great feature of Groove is the ability to pin artists, playlists, and songs to the Windows 10 Start menu. This makes it easy to start playing your favorite tracks directly from the Start menu.

To add an album, artist, or playlist to the Start menu, follow these steps:

1. Find what you want to add from the Groove app by clicking the album, artist, or playlist name.
2. Click the More button.
3. This will give you a pop-up menu where you will see the “Pin to start” option. Selecting this will add the album to the Start menu for easy access.

You have now seen how to add music to your collection, play that music, and access it quickly. But what if you want to have access to music that is not currently in your collection? In the next few sections, you will learn how Groove in Windows 10 makes it easy to obtain music.

Purchasing Songs and Music Subscriptions

As well as Groove playing music stored on your tablet, PC, or the cloud, it also has a library of songs you can purchase. You can purchase a single song or an album. If you want unlimited access to music, there is something called a Groove Music Pass subscription.

Groove Music Pass

The Music Pass subscription is a service that you pay for monthly. With a subscription you can listen to or download any of the songs and albums available in Groove collections. You can browse the Groove Music collection in the Windows Store (as shown earlier in Figure 1-3) for songs, artists, and albums and play them on your phone or tablet.

When you subscribe, you typically pay around \$10 (£7) per month and can access the subscription from any of your devices. So, you can subscribe once and then listen to the music on your Android, iPhone, or Windows phone, tablet, and PC. If you buy a lot of music, then this is a service worth looking at. There is a 30-day free trial available also; you can find out more at

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/groove-music> .

Tip

In some countries, Microsoft's store will often have bundle offers including Office 365 and a Groove Music Pass subscription at a discount. These can be worth looking out for.

Managing Your Devices

If you have a Groove Music Pass subscription, you can stream music on any of your Windows 10 devices as well as iOS, Android, and Xbox.

As you saw earlier in the chapter, you can also download music to play when you're offline. However, there is a four-device limit with Groove, so you can download tracks only from four devices (including iOS, Android, and Windows devices).

The first time you download a song from a device, the device registers it with Groove, and each time you download a song on a new device, the device registers with Groove. Once you have four devices registered, you can't download from another device; you can still stream music but not download it.

If you get rid of a phone or PC and want a new device to be registered in its place, you can remove a device from the list. You can do this by going to the Groove Devices page, which you can launch from Settings in the Groove app.

The Devices page (Figure 1-9) lists the PC, phones, and tablets registered with Groove and the date they were registered.

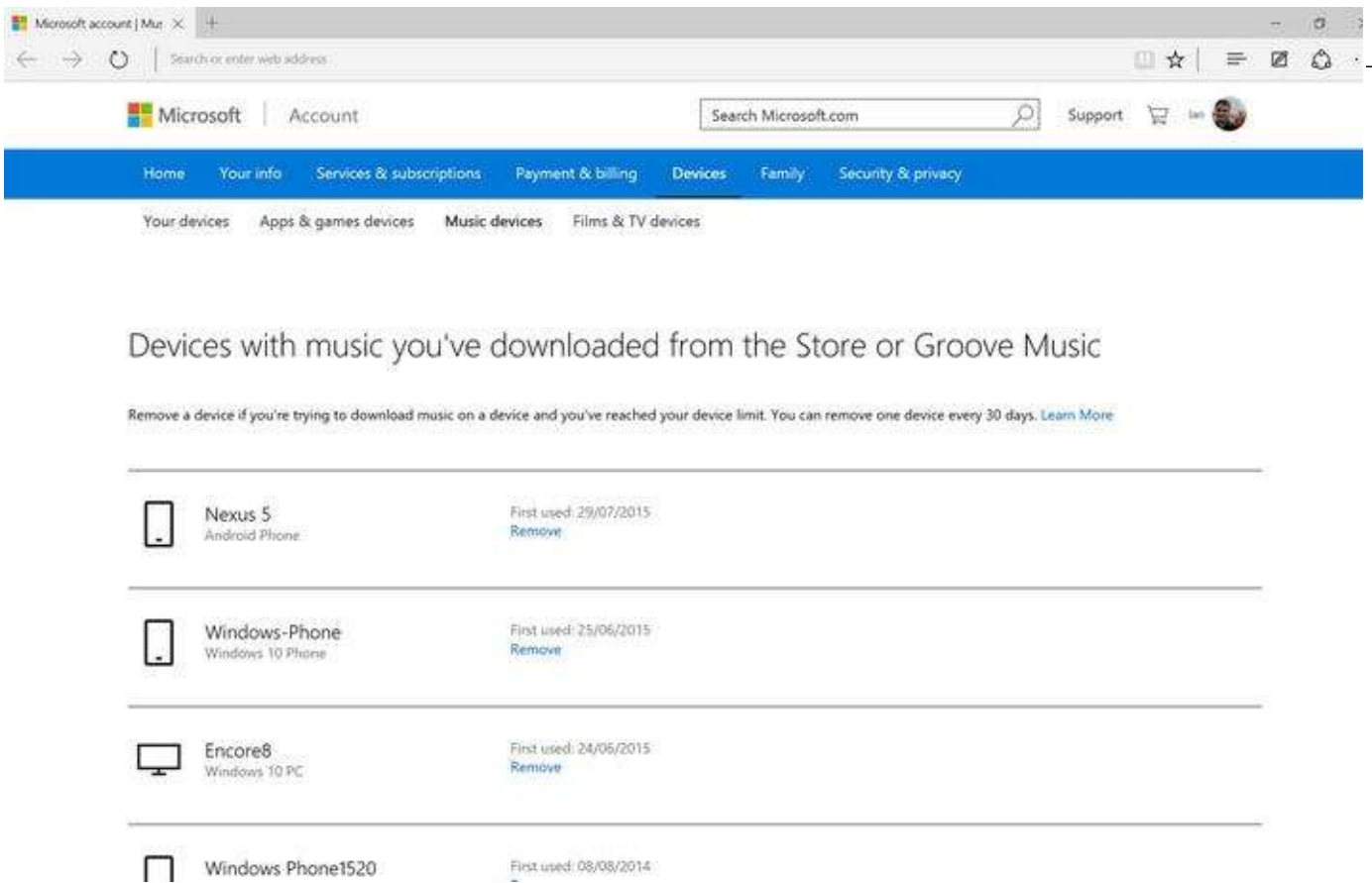


Figure 1-9. Managing your devices for Groove

You can click/tap the Remove button, and it will ask you to confirm your selection. When you do that, it will deregister the device, and you will still be able to stream music on it but not download music.

Note

You can remove only one device every 30 days.

You have now seen how to sign up for a Groove subscription and how to manage what devices you can use that subscription on. In the next section, you will look at how that subscription can improve your Groove experience.

Exploring Music

Note

The Exploring Music option is currently unavailable in Windows 10 Mobile.

Information Windows 10 Mobile is the edition of Windows 10 used on phones and small tablets. Microsoft defines a small tablet as one having a screen size of less than 8 inches diagonally.

If you have a Groove Music Pass, there is another section in the Groove app, labeled Explorer. In this section you can explore (hence the name) the latest music from the Groove Music store. When you open this section, it presents a selection of new music, the current top songs, the top artist, and the top albums.

You can select an album and start playing it exactly as you could if it was one of your own albums.

You can add it to your playlists, start a radio station, and download tracks.

Information

Radio stations in Groove and many of the other streaming services are not traditional broadcasters. Instead, they are a way of producing a random playlist drawn from all available music on the streaming service. These playlists are usually themed around an artist or genre. Examples might be artists like Dire Straits or music from the 1970s.

If you select an artist, you can view albums by artist, and just as you can if you viewed an artist in your collection, you can play and download albums and songs by artist.

Buying Music

You've already learned about Groove subscriptions, but if you do not want to pay a monthly amount and do not have a Groove Music Pass, you can still browse the store and pay for the songs and album you want to buy.

From the Windows Store app (Figure 1-10), you can click/tap the Music link and then browse Microsoft's collection of music.

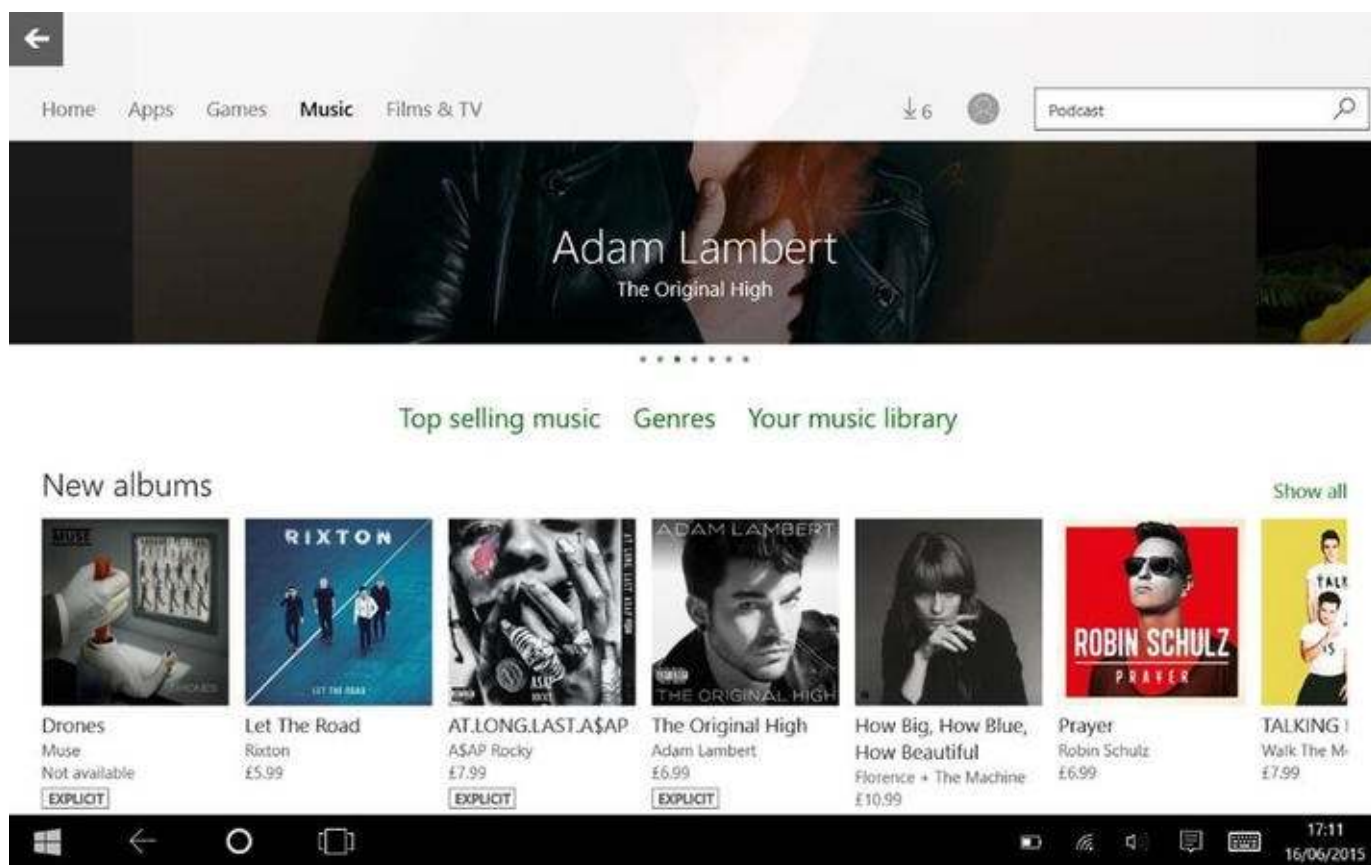


Figure 1-10. The Windows Store

When you see a single song or an album that you are interested in, click/tap the Buy icon, and you will be able to purchase the content. The cost will be charged to your Microsoft account in the same way buying an app would. If you have a Music Pass subscription, you will see a Download button instead of a Buy button. Selecting Download will download the selection to your PC.

Once you have bought a song or album, it is automatically added to your collection and available to play on your other devices by streaming it over the Internet. You can also download your purchase

to your other devices so you can listen to them without being connected to the internet.

Note

If you have iOS devices, Android devices, or a Windows phone, you can still access your music collection from them. Later in this chapter you will see how to access your collection on Android devices, iPhones, and Windows 10 phones.

Groove Radio

Note

You must have an active Groove Music Pass subscription for the radio option to be available.

Groove has a music discovery service that will create a custom radio station based on an artist. To start a station, follow these steps:

1. Select an artist in the music app via the Artists view.
2. Click/tap the Start Radio button that appears.

Groove will create a playlist based on the artist you have selected. You will get some songs from the select artist along with tracks from other artists Groove thinks are similar; you can view the playlist by going to the “Now playing” view in the Groove app. As you listen to songs, the app adds more songs to the playlist.

When you create a radio station, it gets added to the Radio section of the app. If you go to the Radio section, you can view the radio stations you have created. If you select “Start a station,” you can type in the name of an artist or select from popular artists to create a new station.

Searching for Music

With Groove, you can search for songs, artist, or albums via the search box. Just type your search criteria into the box, and Groove will start showing search suggestions. Selecting one of the results will bring up the search results page. Here it will list matching artists, albums, and songs.

If you have a Groove Music Pass, you will see two tabs (Figure 1-11): In collection and Full catalog. The “In collection” tab shows matching content in your own music collection either on the device or in the cloud on OneDrive.

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